



## **CITY OF TAUNTON AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

*Municipal Council Chambers  
Temporary City Hall  
141 Oak Street, Taunton, MA 02780*

---

### **Minutes - Regular Meeting Wednesday, January 23, 2019 at 7:00pm**

**Meeting called to order at 7:05pm.**

**Members Present:** William McCaffrey, Katie Roberts, Carol Doherty, Jonathan Gray, & Arthur Lopes.

**Members Not Present:** None.

**No public input.**

**Introductions:**

Jonathan suggests all commissioners make introductions to each other, and discuss each others backgrounds and previous involvement in agriculture.

Jonathan works at SEMAP, the Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership which works to advance local food in the region by providing technical assistance to farmers, and offering education for the community through workshops, conferences, newsletters, and their website.

Carol helps to run the Taunton Community Gardens which has many garden beds located at the Taunton Nursing Home on Norton Ave. She also serves as an elected member of the Taunton School Committee.

Katie is the Education Coordinator for the Soule Homestead Education Center in Middleborough, which runs several low-cost educational programs that emphasize hands-on learning experiences for school aged children on the farm, which is owned by the Town of Middleborough and leased by the 501(c)3 Soule Homestead Education Center.

William is a farmer at his parent's farm in East Taunton, Spring Rain Farm, where they grow cranberries, hay, and their popular u-pick strawberries. He and his wife Veronica run a separate

farm business on the same property, Old Earth Orchards LLC, where they grow pastured pork, asparagus, rhubarb, blueberries, cranberries, elderberries, and fruit trees so far. They will be selling at the Church Green Farmers Market and through CSA shares. William's wife Veronica is also the Market Manager for the Church Green Farmers Market at the First Parish Church.

Arthur is a member of the Board of Trustees of Bristol County Agricultural High School and Taunton Housing Authority Commissioner. He is a farmer of several parcels in Taunton, and lives on Plain Street. He also serves as an elected member of the Taunton Planning Board.

### **Appointment of leadership positions**

The broad role of each leadership position is discussed. Further rules can be set later, but the Chair will preside over the meetings, sign off on letters to the Mayor, Council, and other boards, in addition to setting meeting agendas and dates. The Vice Chair will assist the Chair in running the Commission, and will serve as the Chair in his or her absence. The Clerk will record the meeting minutes and post the minutes to the City's website. MDAR's ag com handbook will serve as a guide for leadership for now.

**Carol motions that Jonathan serve as the Commission's Chair. Arthur seconds the motion. Motion passes. Jonathan abstains from voting.**

**Carol motions that Katie serve as the Commission's Vice Chair. William seconds the motion. Motion passes. Katie abstains from voting.**

**Carol motions that William serve as the Commission's Clerk. Jonathan seconds the motion. Motion passes. William abstains from voting.**

### **Commission's Rules of Procedure**

Jonathan states that if the Commission needs specific rules set, they can be set by a majority vote of the Commission. Guidance in this regard can be offered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources' "Agricultural Commission Handbook" which is available online. Jon says that he will request that the Mayor's Office print 5 copies for each Commissioner have a handbook.

### **Discussion of a regular meeting schedule**

Jon will send Doodle Poll to determine next meeting date but it would be best to meet on a specific day of the month.

### **Commission's work plan**

The Commission will need to work with SRPEDD and the community to develop a 5-year work plan to guide its activities. Carol asked Jonathan to both send her information on the State's Chapter 61 agricultural tax program, and connect her with Bill Napolitano, SRPEDD's Environmental Program Director who has worked with many Ag Coms in the region on their work plans. Carol also mentioned that it would be good to have a mission statement for the Commission. Jonathan says that for now, the ordinance's language will serve as an adequate mission statement until the Commission wishes to create its own. Arthur noted that the Commission will need to figure out what to do with farmers markets in Taunton, which there is 1, and potentially a second depending on Mass in Motion. Arthur suggests that he bring us

information on Farmers Markets from the USDA Farm Service Agency for the Commission's review.

**Announcements: none**

**Motion to adjourn at 8:25 pm. Motion passes.**